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VICTORIA IVLEVA

Functions of Textile and Sartorial Artifacts in Russian Folktales

My Love in her attire doth show her wit,
It doth so well become her:
For every season she has dressing fit,
For winter, spring and summer.
No beauty she doth miss,
When all her robes are on;
But beauty's self she is,
When all her robes are gone.
—Anonymous madrigal

As Roland Barthes argues, fashion and clothes can be translated into narratives with their own semantics (277). Both texts and clothes have analogous structures of interwoven strands, share similar "manufacturing techniques," being stitched together with words or pieces of fabric, and resemble each other as end products: harmoniously arranged artworks. Perhaps owing to the similarities of texture, thread oftentimes literally and symbolically directs the actions of characters in tales. In this article I intend to define the main functions of textile and sartorial artifacts, of their constituent parts—thread and fabric as well as accessories—in folktales.[1] The examples used for illustration will be mostly limited to the tales from Russia collected by Aleksandr Afanas'ev, who published his first edition between 1855 and 1863. I will also provide occasional references to Western sartorial images that are present in myths and tales.

I. Revealing Function

In folklore, as elsewhere, clothes often play a revealing function, disclosing a character's identity and indicating his social and economic status, professional occupation, geographical origin, gender, and personality traits. Although folk

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stories do not include detailed descriptions of apparel, a crown and other regal attributes, a rich dress or shirt made of thinnest thread can point to a character's royal descent. Sartorial images are frequently accompanied by fixed epithets—"royal attire," "royal cloth," "royal dress," "golden apparel"—that help create syncretic images.[2] The dress of a princess or a merchant's daughter is usually described as glittering, many-colored, or precious (Afanas'ev, *Russkie narodnye skazki* [hereafter, *Rns*], nos. 211, 293, 264; Afanas'ev, *Russian Fairy Tales* [hereafter, *RFaT*] 100; Afanas'ev, *Russian Folk-Tales* [hereafter, *RF-T*] 113). Colored attire signals prosperity, since its creation involved an expensive process (*Rns,* nos. 182, 560; *RFaT* 534). Alternatively, the narrator can indicate the favorable economic status of a hero by referring to his dress as wealthy (*Rns,* nos. 165, 330, 559).

Russian folklore is abundant in stories about merchants and thieves dressed as merchants. Merchants are good negotiators and often can perform difficult tasks. When narrators describe a merchant's dress, they usually emphasize the beauty of his garments: "his camisole / jacket is red / beautiful, the cap on his head is red / beautiful, and the boots on his feet are red / beautiful" ("Horns," *Rns,* no. 193).[3] The adjective *krasnyi* can mean both red and beautiful. Although the narrator highlights the aesthetic aspect of the merchant's garments, one can argue that the merchant's beautiful and colorful attire convey his superior economic standing.

Similarly, clothes can indicate low social position. In the tale "Misery," a poor peasant juxtaposes his meager attire with that of his brother's friends, clearly connecting clothes with their social status: "Your other guests will be merchants in boots and fur coats, and I wear plain linden bark shoes and a wretched gray caftan" (*Rns,* no. 303; *RFaT* 21).[4] A gray caftan called a *seriak* and linden-bark shoes were characteristic garments of simple folk, who often dreamed of acquiring colored attire and boots, ascribing social value to the apparel of rich people. Consequently, vestment fulfilled an ideological function of a social marker being codified in a socially stratified vestimentary system.[5]

Such garments as *lapti* (plain linden-bark shoes) and the *armiak* (a peasant coat of heavy, plain cloth), caftan, *sarafan,* fur coat, *shinel'* (a type of overcoat), *tulup* (a sheepskin coat), and *epancha* (a Russian cloak) suggest the national or geographical origin of characters.[6] Some of these garments, such as the caftan and the sarafan, are not socially marked in tales unless they are accompanied by descriptive adjectives denoting the characters' economic standing (*Rns,* nos. 213, 233, 240).[7] Other garments, like bark shoes, the armiak, or the seriak, on the one hand, and an overcoat, a fur coat, a cloak, or boots, on the other hand, signal social status and oftentimes a profession. Poor country dress is usually more suggestive of the character's geographical origin than rich clothes. Being

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of lower social standing, storytellers were more skillful and detail-oriented in describing the dress of their own social group. Though they refer to Russian national garb, most of these words are of Turkic or Arabic origin.

Some of the garments can help us tell the approximate time when the stories were created. For instance, a sarafan, which was popular in central and northern Russia, became exclusively associated with female dress only in the seventeenth century (Kirsanova, "Russia" 124). "A Frenchified sarafan" was actively promoted as the national costume for Russian gentlewomen starting with the reign of Catherine II. The camisole (men's short jacket) was most probably introduced during the reign of Peter I, along with the European-cut caftan, which played a crucial part in his vestimentary reforms of 1700–1701. These reforms aimed at freeing Russians from their cumbersome dress and inert lifestyle and at leveling social distinctions between the old and new nobility (Brückner 1: 272–76; Kirsanova, *Russkii kostium* 9–15).

Describing foreign dress, narrators usually utilize well-known national sartorial vocabulary and sparingly add exotic details to their depictions: "And in an instant, he found himself dressed in rich garments—cloth became velvet, his caftan glittering with gold, a cloak hanging from his shoulders; a cap like a spiked helmet; ostrich feathers, attached by a stud, swinging from his helmet, the stud decorated with rubies and sapphires, surrounded by pearls" ("The Tale of the Luckless Archer," *Rns,* no. 567: 351). Only the ostrich feathers and perhaps the precious stones in the stud signify the Oriental origin of this dress.

The interest in Oriental material and immaterial culture was strong both in pre-Petrine and post-Petrine culture. In pre-Petrine times, ceremonious royal garments were so heavily adorned with pearls and precious stones and were so uncomfortable that tsars often could not move without the support of their subjects (Zabelin, *Domashnii byt russkikh tsarei* 1.1: 394–95, 413–14; 1.2: 364; *Domashnii byt russkikh tsarits* 2: 360). While fashionable cuts were a distinctive feature of foppish attire in Europe, in Russia wealthy fabrics and rich decorations were the main characteristics of modish dress for a long time (*Domashnii byt russkikh tsarei* 1.2: 474). Following this trend, eighteenth-century courtiers excessively decorated their apparel and footwear with diamonds and precious stones. The exotic features of the foreign apparel in the tale reflect the Oriental tendencies manifested in Russian society.

In addition, *contes orientaux* became very popular in eighteenth-century Europe (Warner, *Fantastic Metamorphoses* 144). "The Tale of the Luckless Archer" has been undoubtedly influenced by this tradition. The story depicts the archer's genie-servant Murza, who appears from a pot. The title *murza* was employed with reference to feudal nobility in Tatar countries. This word was sometimes used in eighteenth-century literary and ideological discourse with

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reference to courtiers, as in Gavrila Derzhavin's poems "Felitsa" (Derzhavin 26–36) and "The Murza's Vision" (37–43).

The princess betrothed to the archer has a Russian name, Milovzora (Looking Sweet), and a shy and pleasant disposition, yet she is also pictured as a nomadic Amazon on a horseback with a spear and arrows. The image of the Amazon became common at the court during periods of female reign. While Catherine I accompanied Peter I to some of his wars and was in charge of the country for a short period of time after his death, Elizabeth and Catherine II transgressed feminine boundaries by becoming famous eighteenth-century rulers, by wearing male attire during their coups, and by donning male garments at their masquerades (Brückner 662–64; Proskurina 14–16, 25, 31–33, 52–53; Catherine II 56–57, 309–10; Kirsanova, *Russkii kostium* 72–77). Catherine II liked to ride a horse astride and was often compared to an Amazon by Russian writers. The reference to an Amazonian princess in the tale may have been a tribute to the androgynous images of empresses cultivated in eighteenth-century Russia.

In tales, garments can also be indicative of social settings and rituals. While warriors fight in armor, heroines put on their best dresses when they attend balls or are about to be wed. Likewise, heroes dress up festively for their meetings with "fair maidens" (*Rns,* no. 240). In "The Magic Mirror," a Russian version of "Snow White," *bogatyrs* (Russian knights) dress a merchant's daughter in a glittering dress in preparation for a funeral (*Rns,* no. 211; Afanas'ev, *Magic Ring* 113).

In addition, tales have a well-developed array of costumes that disclose characters' social roles and occupations. Narrators refer to the dresses of royal families, *boyars,* merchants, generals, bogatyrs, soldiers, doctors, cooks, musicians, peasants, and beggars.[8] The correlation between attire and the way people regard its wearer is very high, a point that can be partially explained by the existence of rigid sumptuary laws in Europe and Russia in the premodern age. In Europe these laws can be traced at least to the twelfth century (Jones 64). In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russia, vestimentary laws were introduced at the beginning of almost every reign and were used as a visual advertisement of a new ideological and political course that often strived to abolish the previous one.

The function of dress as a social, economic, and professional indicator is particularly noticeable in the tales that have clothes-changing episodes. The acquisition of a new status is often accompanied by a change of dress that symbolically represents a hero's new social position. In "The Goldfish," a variant of "The Fisherman and the Fish," the old lady wears more exquisite attire every time the fish grants her a higher status (*Rns,* no. 75; *RFaT* 531–32).[9] The plot

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of "Horns" is constructed around several episodes of changing clothes, accompanied by similar changes of status. In this story, apparel serves two purposes—it discloses certain information about the character and disguises him when necessary.

From the very beginning of the tale, the narrator acknowledges the significance of vestimentary codes in society, as the story starts with Martyshka's enlisting in the army because he does not have apparel suited for any social gatherings. In the course of the tale, the character acquires the status of a soldier twice, becomes a high-ranking official, and then successfully disguises himself in a merchant's and doctor's garments to give a lesson to the princess who robs him of his magic objects. Every change of Martyshka's status is expressed with sartorial images. Depriving the character of his minister's rank, the heroine appropriates Martyshka's magical belongings and disrobes him: "Then she took away his purse with gold and his cards made of pure gold, took off his dress—left only an undershirt on him" (*Rns,* no. 193: 58; my translation).

Historical details (a rank of a minister, a reference to a postilion) and certain objects and notions of material culture (such as shops, uniforms, and overcoats) indicate that the tale was probably composed no earlier than the eighteenth century. The changes of Martyshka's costume express two tendencies within Russian society that started to be deeply felt at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century. One of them manifested itself in the establishment of strict vestimentary codes and the reaffirmation of direct correspondence between appearance and social position. In the tale, the heroine who does not recognize Martyshka in professional dress establishes this sartorial and social equivalence. On the other hand, vestimentary and social mobility exemplified in the episodes of changing one's attire as he or she rises on a social ladder or in swapping episodes signifies a gradual weakening of social boundaries. Military men and merchants were probably the most mobile groups in the eighteenth-century social structure. While the first were often rewarded for their military victories and some of them became favorites of the empresses, the social promotion of merchants can be explained by the growth of mercantile culture.

Vestimentary and social promotions similar to the ones described in "Horns" occur in Cinderella-type stories where the heroine's poor dress magically turns into royal attire: "she put on a little shoe—and immediately she found herself in a beautiful glittering dress" ("Blackie," *Rns,* no. 293: 403). In these stories, poor clothes emphasize the virtuous qualities of maidens and protects them from temptations and misfortunes in a hostile world while a complete misrecognition based on a sartorial change signifies a girl's transitional state from maidenhood to married life. According to Alison Lurie, in

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primitive societies "initiation into manhood or womanhood was marked by the gift of new and adult garments or ornaments" (37).

The new attire, as Carole Scott argues, helps Cinderella realize her "fantasies of empowerment" (151). The anonymity acquired by the heroine through the acquisition of a new dress, on the one hand, strengthens the impact of her empowerment and, on the other, plays a protective role similar to that of poor clothes, helping the maiden reach her self-realization and acquire a new identity. From the ideological perspective, the phenomenon of misrecognition can also be explained by a taboo on wearing attire of higher social classes. The prohibition on dressing above one's social status makes such vestimentary transformations improbable in the eyes of the witnesses and keeps them from imagining a familiar low-class character in a rich dress.

Cinderella-type plots were based on historical customs to some degree, as the tradition of choosing a tsar's bride from a poor noble family was practiced at the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Russian court (Zabelin, *Domashnii byt russkikh tsarits* 2: 217). Tsars often did not want to increase the influence of clans who were already in power and married girls from socially inferior backgrounds. Peter I continued this tradition by choosing his second wife, Catherine I, from a peasant family.

In the stories about Cinderella ("The Golden Little Shoe," "Blackie," and "The Princess in the Underworld Kingdom,") it is symbolic that only the maiden's foot can fit into the shoe: a single sartorial image reveals the identity of the heroine (Thompson H36.1—Slipper test). According to Marina Warner, feet are often "ascribed telltale marks of identity and origin" in fairy tales and legends, perhaps because they are "in touch with earth"—that is, well grounded in life (*From the Beast* 115–16). As Carole Scott asserts, the maiden's first transformation "into an object of desire claims the love of the prince," whereas "the shoe is used in a more personal claiming, one depending on touch and fit rather than visual impression" (156). The fitting test also helps Cinderella acquire a new status. This function of the shoe is based on its more stable characteristics in comparison with the more changeable dress.

In addition to identifying the heroines, shoes play a negotiating role, as they establish power relations between the characters (*Rns,* nos. 292–94; *RFaT* 45–46). In Russian, a sartorial image is used to express these relations: the English saying "to be under someone's thumb" translates into a Russian expression *"byt' pod kablukom"* (to be under someone's heel). Cinderella's shoe, however, can also be interpreted in more general terms as an object that unites two characters in matrimony.

The psychology of characters is not a developed feature in tales. According to Vladimir Propp, characters belong to certain types that we identify based on

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their functions in the plot (20–21, 25–65). Heroes perform a set of roles, but their emotions are almost never emphasized. Their status and societal role may change, their actions may trigger the development of the plot, but the characters themselves neither undergo visible psychological transformations nor have unique faces. Therefore, their attire usually either wholly reveals their identities or conceals them without difficulty if characters wear someone else's clothes. Tales that involve recognition of maidens by their potential partners illustrate this phenomenon of facial anonymity. In such stories, several heroines (often sisters) who look alike wear the same dresses.[10] A suitor is able to recognize his maiden only when she gives him a telling signal—she waves with her handkerchief, adjusts her dress—or the hero feels pins upon touching her hair or sees insects flying above her head (Thompson H161.0.1—Recognition of person among identical companions, H113—Identification by handkerchief). Likewise, several male characters can look like twin brothers when they are dressed similarly (*Rns,* nos. 240, 249). All facial and vestimentary misrecognitions based on the characters' anonymity symbolize their passage through a liminal stage, usually before acquiring a marital status.

II. Concealing Function

The full or almost full identification of a person with his dress explains the success of disguises in folklore. The function of disguise is often displayed in myths and stories involving love intrigues and in tales about thieves, robberies, and other misdeeds. The plots of these two types of stories may merge, since love tales frequently include episodes of abduction, theft, and deception. Gods, heroes, and thieves use disguising tricks to succeed in their tasks. In tales of crime, thieves, potential murderers or abusers, as well as their victims, frequently pose as others by concealing themselves in someone else's garments.[11] A woman sent to kill a stepdaughter and a witch looking for revenge will pretend to be beggars (*Rns,* nos. 137, 210). A victim may dress in an animal's skin to escape his abuser or to pose as prey in order to be quickly transported by an animal to its destination.[12] A thief will wear the garb of the owner from whom he steals or the skin of animals that are associated with the devil (goat's skin, for instance) in order to deceive and scare his victims (*Rns,* nos. 383, 384, 386; *RFaT* 592). He often starts his craft by acquiring a rich man's attire and boots. In Afanas'ev's tale no. 383, the thief brings the landowner's boots to his own father, replacing his linden-bark shoes. Interestingly, in Russian, one of the verbs that refers to swindling, *oblaposhit',* comes from the word *lapti* (linden-bark shoes), hinting at the social status of common thieves. Literally *oblaposhit'* means to dress someone who ordinarily wears more elegant footwear, in peasant liden-bark shoes (Preobrazhenskii 433–34). Disguising their

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identity, characters acquire power that helps them succeed in their endeavors. A new dress symbolically expresses a change of fortune. The permanence or reversal of the characters' luck usually depends on their virtuous or evil nature.

Some of the disguised characters return home after trips and stay unrecognized until they disclose their identity or until their partners recognize them from a telling sign. As Propp observes, "the hero stays with some sort of artisan (goldsmith, tailor, shoemaker, etc.), serving as apprentice," or "he arrives at the court of some king, and serves either as a cook or a groom" (60). Characters can also disguise themselves as beggars or wear the apparel of professional men—tailors, seamstresses, cobblers, shepherds, or musicians.[13] They can approach their partners by demonstrating "professional" skills and in this way attract their attention and win them back.

Such a change of dress serves as an initiation rite: acquiring a certain profession, going through a "professional" trial, characters are initiated or reinitiated into society as equal or fully developed members, ready to gain or regain their marital status. For instance, the main heroine of "The Magic Mirror" disguises herself as a male apprentice to the cook in order to be close to her husband. The husband recognizes her after she takes off the cook's dress (*Rns,* no. 211; Afanas'ev, *Magic Ring* 115).[14]

The mirror plays a malignant role in both versions of the tale: identifying the heroine as the most beautiful woman, it invites her stepmother's revenge. Mirrors were introduced into Russian culture in the second half of the seventeenth century and at first were covered with fabric or shutters so that they did not interfere with the pious Russian lifestyle (Zabelin, *Domashnii byt russkikh tsarei* 1.1: 219–20, 280). Their connotations of temptation and sin are preserved in the stories.

In "The Magic Mirror," the exchange of clothes with a seaman in the first part of the story and the later change of garments by the heroine result in disguising not only her social and economic statuses, but also her gender. Cross-dressing provides protection for the heroine from male seducers (Thompson K521.4.1—Disguise in clothes of other sex so as to escape). A similar act of cross-dressing occurs in "The Robbers," where the heroine disguises herself as a male servant (*Rns,* no. 343). In both stories, women acquire narrative voices and assume the roles of storytellers after concealing themselves as men. Storytelling is usually a prerogative of men in Russian tales while women choose silent ways of telling their stories through the artifacts they create. Cross-dressing, however, allows the heroines to exercise gender roles associated with the opposite sex, retell their stories of misfortune, and become judges of evil characters. In both tales the narrators emphasize the truthfulness of the heroines' stories, juxtaposing them with fairy tales. The heroines play the role of alternative mirrors that deliver truth about their abusers.

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As in other folkloric traditions, in Russian tales heroines often try to escape marriage by fighting with their potential suitors or asking them to perform challenging tasks (Thompson T311—Woman averse to marriage). Storytellers usually choose androgynous names for these damsels, calling them maiden tsars, maiden bogatyrs, or champion maidens, and bestow both feminine and masculine characteristics on them. While accentuating the beauty of the maiden tsars, the narrators also portray them engaged in activities that are usually associated with men. These heroines govern kingdoms, give orders to their own bogatyrs, and have miraculous strength. They resemble swan and dove maidens, being transitional creatures and performing ambiguous gender roles. Their physically weak suitors manage to tame them with the help of their "mentors."[15]

In several versions of "The Bold Knight, the Apples of Youth, and the Water of Life," storytellers describe kingdoms of maidens, with one of the heroines fulfilling the role of the maiden tsar (*Rns,* nos. 171–78; *RFaT* 314–20). These Amazonian maiden bogatyrs live in their matriarchal society separated from the rest of the world. Interestingly, when in one of the stories a hero is unable to perform a manly task and ends up in the cellar being deceived by a woman, she mocks him by throwing him a tow and promising to feed him only when he learns to spin. His fall from the bed to the cellar is accompanied by the reversal of the gender roles while the spinning task also humorously hints at unfulfilled sexual intercourse.

A similar reversal can be seen in "Vasilii the Prince and Elena the Fair" (*Rns,* no. 314). The storyteller portrays Elena the Fair as a wise maiden who rules over her kingdom; gives a difficult task to her brother, the Bright Falcon, asking him to sew a magic fur coat for her future husband in one night; and instructs her bridegroom, Vasilii, on his future steps. Later, people of the city where she lives appoint her as their king, seeing a prophetic sign when she walks into the church dressed as a man.

The stories of maidens receiving God's blessing to reign probably became popular at the end of the seventeenth century when royal women, starting with Sophia, the sister of Peter I, began to cultivate their right to become the rulers of the country. According to Aleksandr Kamenskii, Sophia's reign at the end of the seventeenth century marked "the crisis of traditionalism" in Russia (37). In order to raise her political importance, Sophia relied on Byzantine culture that significantly influenced Russian traditional lifestyle in the previous centuries, drawing on the example of the princess Pulcheria, who ruled the Byzantine empire after the death of her father (Zabelin, *Domashnii byt russkikh tsarits* 2: 150–52). The elevation of the role of women at the end of the seventeenth century can be compared with the status of female bogatyrs and wise maidens in Russian folklore.

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In folklore it is more common for a woman to dress in male attire than for a man to wear female apparel (Thompson K1836—Disguise of man in woman's dress, K1837—Disguise of woman in man's dress). The very notion of masquerade is traditionally associated with the female domain and feminocracy (Castle 254–55). One of the most popular gender-concealing plots involves a heroine who disguises her identity to save her husband from imprisonment.[16] The plot of these stories was probably influenced by the popular Russian legend about the princess Olga, who devised retaliating stratagems against her husband's murderers. In "The Tsaritsa Harpist," the heroine saves her husband from imprisonment, as she is unable to rely on the tsar's ministers to do so. She cuts her hair and dons male apparel, disguising herself as a musician who plays the traditional Russian *gusli* (an old, Russian multi-string plucked instrument), and travels to a distant land on her own (*Rns,* no. 338; *RF-T* 75–77). Cross-dressing and traveling to an exotic, medial space, which, according to Marjorie Garber, allows a person "to put his past under erasure," become interconnected in the story (339). The narrator explains that the disguise performs a protective function. Yet the tsaritsa obviously enjoys her empowerment and theatrical reenactment of the gender roles of the opposite sex, since, in the Russian version, she does not reveal her identity to her husband on their way back. The space of transgression allows her to construct a new gender identity that makes her capable of liberating her temporarily powerless husband. Her persistence in reenacting her male identity destabilizes their previously established social and gender roles.

The Russian version emphasizes the storyteller's traditional, patriarchal attitude toward the tsaritsa's cross-dressing. Although he approves of the heroine's heroic deed, he nevertheless does not forget to add that she dressed appropriately when she donned her usual female attire. The proper dress code needs to be reestablished at the end of the story. Moreover, the initial lack of information about the tsaritsa's whereabouts after her disappearance from the court is interpreted as a sign of her unfaithfulness, leaving no doubt that her cross-dressing would have been met with disapproval if it were not motivated by external circumstances.

Sometimes cross-dressing does not serve any noble cause. A heroine may assume all the roles of the opposite sex, finding them more appropriate for herself, and stay unrecognized in the course of the trials intended to reveal her identity, as in the case of Russian heroine Vasilisa, the priest's daughter (*Rns,* no. 316; *RF-T* 147–50; Thompson H1578—Test of sex: to discover person masking as of other sex). A woman regains her autonomous power through the act of cross-dressing, reenacting "a costume drama of misrule" (Gilbert 400). In Stella Bruzzi's words, she imagines herself into a male gender and participates in its construction (199). The narrator presents Vasilisa's intentional

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disguise and her performance of male roles with humor, explaining that many believed she was a man, particularly because she was a fancier of vodka.

The heroine's name, Vasilisa Vasil'evna (the daughter of Vasilii), hints at her androgynous nature, since Vasilisa is a female counterpart of Vasilii. Her male name, Vasilii Vasil'evich (Vasilii, the son of Vasilii), emphasizes her masculine qualities. The tsar who undertakes unsuccessful attempts to discover the true identity of the wise maiden, on the other hand, has an effeminate name, Barkhat (Velvet). During the tsar's tests involving objects that are traditionally associated with the female domain, such as tambour and pearls, to which, according to the character Baba-Yaga, a heroine is supposed to react differently than a hero, Vasilisa shames the tsar for having these objects in his house, thus undermining his masculinity. Such demeaning of heroes by either dressing them in female garments or associating textile objects with them has a long tradition in Western culture, going back to the effeminizing image of Hercules spinning (Garber 53).

The reversal of expected gender roles reaches its culmination during the last trial, when the tsar is unable to quickly take off his clothes in the bathhouse to discover Vasilisa's identity. As a result, the heroine leaves his house, calling him a crow unable to catch a falcon (meaning a scatterbrain who gets nothing for his pains). Conveniently, the falcon is of masculine gender in Russian while the crow is a feminine word. Vasilisa's walking on a velvet carpet when she arrives at Barkhat's house for the last trial symbolically hints at the result of the test.

Men rarely disguise themselves in female attire, more commonly donning animal skins instead, but occasionally they put on female clothes for protection (*Rns,* no. 105; *RF-T* 51). A hero, usually a jester, may put on female garb when he tries to deceive someone. In such cases, he may also engage in textile activities such as spinning or knitting to camouflage his identity more genuinely. All male cross-dressings and effeminate actions are usually presented in a humorous or mocking form and often lead to complications, such as a marriage of a heterosexual man to another man and his narrow escape after the wedding (*Rns,* nos. 397, 399; *RFaT* 151).

In addition to hiding gender, dress may help to conceal social status (*Rns,* no. 567). The significance of this disguising function is demonstrated in the plots where servants swap their apparel with that of their masters (Thompson K527.3—Exchange of clothes between master and his servant). Although in some tales such changes of attire produce negative results, and characters often see through the appearance, as is true in "Princess Grey Duck," in the majority of cases, protagonists succeed in hiding their identities. Unsuccessful disguise usually signifies that the tale is of a more modern origin. In "Princess Grey Duck,"

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the prince discovers a forgery when he compares a portrait of the heroine with the fake princess (*Rns,* no. 264). Portraits do not belong to the standard fairy-tale set of images, because they suggest the presence of an individualized face.

While the prince is able to figure out the fake identity of the imposter, the servants retain the belief in the omnipotent power of dress. They assume that the stolen clothes will conceal the maid's identity. The strength of this belief among the lower classes can be explained by their lesser mobility along the social ladder and consequent stronger identification with dress. Yet, by swapping attire with their masters, low-class characters challenge the existing notions of class hierarchy and pave the path for social mobility (Wyngaard 33).

Sometimes heroines are unable to recognize their partners when the latter put on their armor. In many of these stories, clothing plays a transformational role, since characters succeed in changing their attire, demeanor, and personality with the help of magic. These narratives usually involve simpletons who turn out to be mighty and daring bogatyrs—for instance, by climbing in and out of their magic steed's ear (*Rns,* nos. 179, 180, 564, 571). In Stella Bruzzi's words, replacing their figurative "uniform of a loser," they put on "the performative value of masculinity" (86, 89). Such stories resemble tales about Cinderella, which employ a similar motif of misrecognition. Yet, while maidens usually try to restore the social position they have lost with the death of their mother, simpletons change into bogatyrs, pursuing an active lifestyle. Whereas the exquisite dress that maidens acquire performs a more passive function of accentuating their virtues, simpletons' new attire frequently refashions an inert and weak character into a strong, active hero. Simpletons do not always use magic to alter their appearance and behavior. A simple change of clothes, the hiding of their faces, or an unexpected feat may create a similar effect (*Rns,* no. 296; *RFaT* 103, 106).

Sometimes characters pose as others when they feel envious of someone's success. When the Russian bogatyr Alesha Popovich, the son of the priest, whom the storyteller calls a woman mocker, puts on a beggar's attire to collect Danilo's golden egg as alms, this is obviously not to improve his economic status (*Rns,* no. 313; *RFaT* 259). He sees Danilo the Luckless as his potential rival and enjoys provoking him. The disguise is prompted by psychological motivations; its function denotes a more recent origin of the story or its legendary nature.

Concealment can exert a psychological impact on characters. The main hero of "The Tale of a Mean Wife" manages to get rid of a little demon by scaring him off with his appearance. He puts on his torn old clothes instead of new garments, scratches his face to look more dramatic, and announces to the demon that his wife has come back from hell and beaten him. On hearing this

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news, the demon retreats to hell and celebrates his deliverance from potential danger (*Rns,* no. 435). The disguise triggers the change of the demon's emotional state: at first he becomes scared of the woman, and then he cheers up, joining his brothers in celebration. Such satires on evil wives were popular in the *Domostroi* or "House Orderer," a Russian book on household management that emerged in the late medieval period and continued to be popular in the seventeenth century.

In many of the above tales, the function of dress can be interpreted as both revealing and concealing, depending on one's point of view. The apparel is associated with a particular social and economic status, professional occupation, or gender, and in this way it is revealing. Its function is concealing, on the other hand, when there is a discrepancy between the attire and the character's identity and when the character tries to disguise himself by wearing someone else's attire. In these cases, apparel expresses an intentional, desired status rather than an actual one. Thus the concealing and revealing functions of the dress depend on the nature of its relationship with the wearer. If this relationship is harmonious, one can make assumptions about the character's status and social role by judging his clothes. But when the relationship is artificially imposed by the wearer or circumstances, then the function of dress becomes concealment.

III. Transformational Function

Another important function that garments play in tales is transformational. According to Marina Warner, a traditional metamorphic tale contains a character's search for selfhood in the process of which he undergoes concealments and transformations (*Fantastic Metamorphoses* 85). Premodern people believed in the ability of gods and witches to change into animals. They deemed that the body was a garment for the soul and therefore could take different shapes. While the wolf is probably the best-known mythological animal among Indo-European peoples and thus a frequent character in folklore, protagonists can assume the appearance of other animals as well.[17] Russian folklore presents many tales in which characters change from animals and objects to people and vice versa (*Rns,* nos. 153, 158, 159; *RFaT* 492, 553–56). In many stories, characters turn into doves, swans, ducks, spoonbills, falcons, eagles, ravens, sparrows, wolves, bears, horses, goats, snakes, frogs, fish, flowers, or inanimate objects such as spindles as a result of magic spells (Thompson D100–399—Transformation: man to animal, man to object, animal to person).[18] Consequently, the endeavors of their partners and relatives involve attempts to break these spells through their psychic quests. Leonard Barkan explains metamorphosis as "the moment when the divine enters the familiar"

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and links this process with the creation of "the corporeal metaphor"and the notion that "the nature of a thing can be read in its shape" (18, 75, 88). The transitional creatures usually acquire a definite human form and a stable social status at the end of such stories, becoming immune to metamorphoses.

Before embarking on journeys in search for their partners, characters may steal or destroy their partners' wings, animal skin, or dress, thereby inadvertently undermining their partners' ability to acquire their previous form. This violation of balance often initiates the unraveling of the story. Helpers may assist characters by assuming the appearance of animals or by turning the characters into animals and objects.[19] In Jack Zipes's words, one can say that most Russian heroes are "heterodynamic," being dependent on helpers and donors for their survival (*Breaking the Magic Spell* 49).

Pursuit episodes frequently include transformations: both heroes and their pursuers may turn into animals and objects to conceal their identity, or one of the characters may throw different magic objects (towels, combs, etc.) that turn into barriers (for instance, forests and lakes), helping the heroes escape.[20] Likewise, magic objects may create or become bridges over otherwise impassable rivers to assist characters in reaching their destinations (*Rns,* nos. 159, 172; *RFaT* 561).

Besides frequent transformations of maidens into swans and doves, common for many folk traditions, damsels in Russian tales often transform into ducks, spoonbills, and frogs.[21] An animal's grammatical gender usually dictates the sex of the transformed person.

Certain garments—for instance, magic shirts—can have a transformational impact on protagonists' physical state; heroes acquire strength and become undefeatable when they wear magic attire (Thompson D1300–1379—Magic objects effect changes in persons). In one of the versions of "The Magic Shirt," the garment makes the character not only impervious to bullets but also wise (*Rns,* no. 209). The change of apparel visually signals external social and internal psychological transformations.

Belief in the transformational power of raiment goes back to the perception of clothes as man's second skin. In old Russian culture, tsaritsas often kept royal linens and underwear in locked trunks so that no witchcraft or evil eye could penetrate to them and their wearers. Whenever witchcraft in regard to royal apparel and linen was suspected because of holes in the fabric, for instance, everyone who might have touched the garments, from the seamstress to their keeper, was questioned and often imprisoned and tortured (Zabelin, *Domashnii byt russkikh tsarei* 1.1: 277–79).

In folklore, disguises and transformations are usually provoked by external factors. Since storytellers do not show their characters' psychological development, we do not usually see internally motivated changes in their protag-

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onists' behavior. The rudiments of a psychologically motivated transformational function, however, can be found in episodes where the change of attire indicates the beginning of a new life, as in the case of Cinderella or simpletons becoming daring bogatyrs.

IV. Aesthetic Function

In addition to revealing, disguising, and transformational roles, garments can perform aesthetic and utilitarian functions. Sometimes the first two functions coexist with the last two. The aesthetic function usually manifests itself when one feels relatively safe from external dangers. As mentioned earlier, characters dress in exquisite attire to choose a partner, get married, or participate in some other celebration. Poor virtuous girls and fools, like the heroine from the Emelya the Simpleton stories, who dream about wearing beautiful clothes are usually rewarded with them by the end of the stories.[22] As Carole Scott observes, "garments express the rules of a moral universe with appropriate rewards and punishment" (151). Beautiful attire, however, does not necessarily have good connotations, sometimes being associated with deception. For example, in "The Robbers" the parents do not see through the robbers' exquisite dress—blue caftans, red silk belts, and velvet hats—and give their daughter away to one of them, supposing that she is marrying a rich person (*Rns,* no. 343; *RFaT* 420).

The aesthetic function often reveals itself in various types of explicit and implicit competitions. For instance, maidens may participate in tailoring competitions to win heroes' hearts. In stories of this type, heroes usually overhear a conversation between three sisters in which the first two heroines dream about making certain cloth artifacts, such as a shirt made of the thinnest and smoothest thread, a silver or golden caftan, or a flying carpet for the prince.[23] If the wives of the princes are involved in such contests, the tsar compares and comments on the aesthetic quality of their products (*Rns,* nos. 267, 269; *RFaT* 120). And if heroes are engaged in sartorial trials, they are usually asked to bring beautiful ready-made garments or find tailors who can make the finest clothes.[24]

In stories about evil stepmothers, in which two stepsisters are constantly compared with each other, the storyteller highlights the differences in their appearance, personality, and roles in domestic activities. The finest garments that the woman's biological daughter wears cannot compensate for the true beauty of a stepdaughter dressed in poor attire (*Rns,* nos. 292, 293; *RFaT* 44–45). A stepdaughter is usually presented as virtuous and beautiful, perhaps because she is connected with the higher, divine reality of the otherworld through her

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mother. Maria Warner links the image of ashes and the poor dress of Cinderella-type heroines with mourning for their parents (*From the Beast* 206–07).

When the aesthetic function of clothes is in accord with the virtuous character of its wearer, the narrator interprets the beauty of dress in a positive light. Whenever, on the other hand, the external form finds itself in contrast with the "content" and hides a wicked individual, the beauty of the attire immediately loses all attraction. Thus, goodness and beauty are interrelated in the tales; they become two sides of the same coin. Narrators seek to achieve this harmonious unity, which they do when the good "content" acquires its beautiful form.

Since a pious, ascetic lifestyle was cultivated in old Russia, the attitude to self-beautification was often negative. Foppish characters were typically ridiculed in folklore. In "The Feather of Finist, the Bright Falcon," a Russian version of "The Black Bull of Norroway," the narrator's attitude toward female trendy dressers is disapproving. He makes his readers realize the internal dissonance between a fancy form and the unflattering content (*Rns,* no. 234; *RFaT* 580). Likewise, in the tales of bogatyrs, storytellers emphasize that heroes tighten their Circassian saddles "with twelve silken girths not for beauty's sake, but for strength" (*Rns,* nos. 312, 317; *RFaT* 70). The narrators choose a protective function over the aesthetic one to dissociate their protagonists from any connotations of self-beautification, which can make them look effeminate.

V. Protective Function

The presence of complex classifications that differentiate between protective vestimentary roles argues for the greater persistence of the latter function. According to J. C. Flügel's classification, garments defend us from a number of threats that range from bad weather and enemies to various moral and psychological dangers. Characters of tales and *bylinas* (or traditional Russian heroic narrative poems) wear armor and protective attire and have magic swords to defend themselves against their opponents.[25] A magic shirt in this context, as Propp suggests, acquires a protective role, making the character impervious to any harm until another character seizes the garment (33, 134).[26]

Dress accessories and other textile products can also defend characters from enemies. Propp identifies the protective semantics of a magic kerchief "which affords rescue from pursuit" and "gives a signal of misfortune," but other textile products and accessories play similar roles (50). Brushes, combs, towels, and kerchiefs become impassable impediments blocking a pursuer's way by in effect casting a spell on him (Propp 57; Sokolov 426).[27] The magic objects derive their semantics, in part, from the belief in the supernatural

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power of charms inherited from deceased relatives (Spencer 187; Thompson D800–D1699—Magic objects). Their semantics may also have resulted from the strengthening and amplification of the protective function. Whenever dress accessories play this role, they enter into metonymical relations with clothes. The functions of attire are here transferred onto secondary items, hyperbolically enlarging their power.

Weather is rarely described in tales, perhaps because they deal with a tamed, "objectified" reality (presented in the form of objects) where protagonists overcome "objectified" fears and obstacles and proceed toward a happy ending. For this reason, this protective function of apparel is rarely emphasized. Yet in "Father Frost," a Russian variant of "Frau Holle," one of the characters dies because she is poorly dressed and does not behave respectfully toward "the god of weather," while the virtuous heroine receives warm clothes and blankets, thereby surviving the cold (*Rns,* nos. 95, 96; *RFaT* 368). Still, it is mainly her good nature that helps her withstand hardship and obey the Frost, who plays the patriarchal role of the godfather, donor, and bridegroom.

Disguising attire can protect characters from physical, psychological, and moral dangers ("The Pig's Cover," *Rns,* nos. 290, 291). For instance, in "Know-Not," no one—not even the wife of Neznaiko (Know-Not) or her father—is able to recognize the hero dressed in armor until he discloses his identity after winning all of his battles (*Rns,* no. 296; *RFaT* 103, 108). Such anonymity is psychologically motivated and plays a defensive role, since undefined, unnamed things—which, metaphorically speaking, do not have formal boundaries—usually stir fear because of their implicit openness, potential to be unpredictable, and impossibility to be tamed.

Infants, who are susceptible to misfortune, often need to be protected from death, the devil, and evil heroines who try to replace children with animals and objects to slander their mothers.[28] In one of the versions of "The Sea Tsar and Vasilisa the Wise," a hunter successfully hides his child from the devil by dressing him in a dog's skin (*Rns,* no. 221). Apparel that helps victims conceal their identities from their abusers plays both a disguising and a protective role.

As I mentioned earlier, storytellers may implement an implicit disguise in addition to the explicit one that exists on the level of narration, concealing virtuous characters in poor clothes. It would seem that narrators "disguise" the personages in this attire to protect them from the evil eye, to help them remain virtuous, and, thus, to defend them against physical and moral dangers. Positive characters look less conspicuous in old garments and therefore are less susceptible to external harm.

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VI. Auxiliary Utilitarian Functions

Fabrics, clothes, and accessories may perform other utilitarian functions as well. The self-flyer (a magic carpet), winged sandals, and seven-league boots transport characters through space (Ireland 26, 88; Thompson D1520.10.1—Magic transportation by sandals, D1520.19—Magic transportation by carpet, D1521.1—Seven-league boots).[29] The Frog Princess uses the self-flyer to escape from her suitor's pursuit and return to old Russia (*Rns,* no. 267; *RFaT* 123.[30] In "The Enchanted Princess," a soldier travels by carpet in search of his princess (*Rns,* no. 272).

Characters often have several magic carriers and objects—a flying carpet, seven-league boots, a magic tablecloth, and a cap of invisibility—in their arsenal. The role of the cap is ambivalent: on the one hand, it fulfills the same function as any disguising dress, only the disguise takes an extreme form; on the other hand, the character wearing the cap disappears in space, and therefore one can argue that the magical headgear takes the character to another dimension (Thompson D1361.15—Magic cap renders invisible: tarnkappe).[31] The hero usually receives the cap with at least one additional means of transportation—a self-flyer or boots, so the headdress performs an auxiliary role, helping the character to travel through space unnoticed. The mantle of invisibility, which is popular in Western folkloric traditions, is not mentioned in the discussed collection. According to Raisa Kirsanova, this garment started to be used as a symbolic attribute of power only during the late Baroque period in Russia, hence its absence in tales (*Russkii kostium* 68).

Thread may have a utilitarian application in tales, and not only when characters sew or embroider textile artifacts. Ariadne's thread, which she gives to Theseus, or a ball of yarn, which characters of tales receive from their helpers, serve as guiding tools that help them reach their destinations (Thompson H1226.4—Pursuit of rolling ball of yarn leads to quest).[32] This function of thread is semantically close to the life-death symbolism of Parcae's spinning. Personages typically receive balls of yarn from female helpers—young and old women, wives, and bird maidens, rather than from men. Women are in charge of thread, because spinning, weaving, embroidering, and sewing have long been associated with the female domain.[33] Likewise, life and death are feminine concepts in Russian due to the grammatical gender. In the tales, the ball of yarn is usually granted to a positive character who uses it for constructive deeds while trips that personages make to reach their goals symbolically represent their destinies. The ball of yarn that guides the characters in their journeys as they seek to accomplish dangerous initiation tasks protects them and, metaphorically speaking, helps them to discover their lost harmony and in this sense to "stitch together" their separated parts.

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VII. Negotiating Function

Clothes may take part in various kinds of negotiations (*Rns,* no. 383, 388; *RFaT* 591). Since attire is associated with money and treasure, it can be promised as payment for services, be lost in games, squandered on drinks, sold, stolen, or promised by thieves in exchange for life.[34] Garments that participate in acts of exchange, gift giving, and theft play a bonding role, helping characters to establish a variety of relationships, which range from friendship and love to ownership and animosity.

These acts of positive and negative negotiation often function as plot movers. In two versions of "The Thief," the main characters start their "professional vocation" by stealing boots and soles (*Rns,* nos. 383, 390; *RFaT* 591).[35] Only after succeeding with the footwear do the thieves turn to cattle or the tsar's monetary treasures. In both stories, theft is at the core of the plot intrigue, as it triggers action and engages characters in positive or negative mediation.

Garments may also symbolize the acquisition of power over other characters through the acts of theft. Heroines become victims of theft when they are vulnerable. By stealing the attire (a shift, dress, or wings) of heroines, often while they bathe, heroes deprive female characters of their ability "to take on a different form" and in this way acquire power over them that often results in matrimony (Thompson T56.3—Wooing bathing nymphs by stealing their clothes).[36] This motif is a well-known folklore element described in Selkie legend (where seals transform into humans) and many others.

Maria-Louise von Franz interprets the feather garment as "the flighty inhuman quality of the anima" and as "greater knowledge and the possibility of the greater inner realizations of life" (122–23). The change of form that suggests the heroines' half-animal (emotional) and half-human (rational) state usually implies their superiority, frequently expressed in the images of flying, and their ability to separate from other characters.[37] The ambiguity of their appearance symbolically represents the liminal stage through which they pass before their partners free them from the spell. The loss of an alternative form places them within reasonable, exposed boundaries and makes them susceptible. Therefore, marriage becomes a logical outcome of this process of "taming."

Textile artifacts may become objects of exchange or can be given voluntarily to one's partner as a sign of their bond. In "The Prince and His Servant," the princess ties the hero's wounded arm with a half of her shawl, symbolically taking care of his wounded heart (*Rns,* no. 124).[38] This act of emblematic binding and the sharing of the exact half of the shawl with the heroine's future partner convey the bonding nature of her actions. At the end of the story, this part of the shawl helps her recognize her partner (Thompson H117—Identification by cut garments, H118—Identification by shred of garment of

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rescued princess used as bandage for wound).[39] Characters can be involved in acts of symbolic bonding without consciously realizing the nature of these relations. The heroine of "Know-Not" bandages her husband's arm with the scarf that bears her name without being aware of the man's identity (*Rns,* nos. 295, 296; *RFaT* 108). In addition to uniting the characters, the shawl/scarf plays a protective role in the last two examples.

In "The Thoughtless Word," the embroidered scarf, which the heroine gives as a parting gift to her beloved to remind him of the happy moments they shared, functions as a symbolic substitute for the woman (*Rns,* no. 228). As soon as the garment is stolen, the psychological balance is violated, and the character feels a need to see the heroine, who turns out to be dead. Here we observe another case of the rudiments of psychological behavior. This example echoes the anthropological data found in Herbert Spencer's *The Principles of Sociology:* decorative badges sometimes functioned as mementoes of the ties that existed between primitive man and late members of his clan (187). The bonding symbolism of folktale apparel and textile products probably derives its semantics from this meaning of decorative badges.

Iurii Sokolov singles out a group of "prophetic" objects that "possess the property of revealing, at a great distance, what has happened to the hero" (426). These objects include a handkerchief, a towel, a pair of gloves, a shirt, a ring, and the silver from the house. In case of misfortune, they either tarnish or become spotted with blood. Their function can be defined as both revealing and bonding, since the ties established between the characters help them interpret prophetic signs.[40]

Garments, footwear, and accessories that play a negotiating (bonding or controlling) role in tales functionally resemble trophies, which, according to Spencer, represent their owner's power and superiority (189–90).[41] This negotiating function can display itself in both human and metaphysical relations. Just like one human being can gain power over another by stealing a heroine's belt, for instance, on a metaphorical level, death can attain control over one's life by cutting its thread.

In Slavic spells, thread is associated with life, death, and illness: spinning, sewing, and embroidering help to stop bleeding and heal a wound (Kliaus 207, 282, 286, 289, 294–95). A thread, in these cases, symbolically represents blood; therefore, when it is broken, a wound stops bleeding. Since thread often symbolizes the lives and fates of characters, it possesses both a creative and a destructive power. In "The Witch and the Sun's Sister," a modified version of this function is employed. Trunks that contain unused needles and thread metaphorically represent the duration of the old ladies' lives (*Rns,* no. 93). In "Prince Ivan and Belyi Polianin," on the other hand, needles and thread acquire a more positive, life-giving meaning: in this tale, tailors and shoemak-

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ers possess a godlike power to grant life to human beings.[42] They exercise their sewing skills, creating armies of warriors for Baba-Yaga (*Rns,* no. 161; *RFaT* 480–81).[43] Although the creative and destructive functions of thread and needles are polar opposites, they are twin children of the same source that governs human life.

Like thread and needles, pins, magic shirts, rings, and ribbons may wield a controlling power over life. A pin pricked in the protagonist's dress or a magic shirt that he wears can cause his death or prolonged sleep (Thompson D1364.15—Pin causes magic sleep).[44] In "The Magic Mirror," a ring that the heroine puts on her finger, a pin that she places in her hair in one of the versions, and a ribbon placed around her neck in another version, put her into a deathlike sleep (*Rns,* nos. 210, 211; Afanas'ev, *Magic Ring* 112). The magic semantics of the ring and ribbon are linked with the roles they play in such initiation rituals as weddings and deaths. Both objects signify a transition from one stage of life to another and bonds or ownership in these rites.

Whereas a ring's bonding function is well known, a ribbon's symbolism is less conspicuous. The ribbon tied across the door of the church or home in some wedding traditions symbolizes matrimonial unity. In Russian wedding rituals, ribbons, hair bands, and other national head garments signify maidenhood, the bonding ties that a girl has with her previous life. A bride bids farewell to her girlhood by giving out ribbons and hair bands to her maiden friends, who undo her braid. Later, after the wedding ceremony in the church, her hair is braided into two tresses, which symbolize her marital bond.

In folktales, women, particularly those of marriageable age or young wives, are often engaged in crafts that belong to the female domain and serve as initiation trials (Thompson H383.2.2—Bride test: weaving magic cloth, sewing magic shirt).[45] These stories are popular in many folk traditions and are variants of the Rumpelstiltskin/Tom Tit Tot tale. Women have to prove that they will become good housewives and that they deserve to be married to royal characters by spinning high-quality thread; weaving thin, exquisite fabrics and carpets; embroidering towels and crowns; and sewing shirts. While being engaged in these textile activities, maidens undergo a symbolic process of domestication. As Jack Zipes asserts, "It is through spinning that a young woman was initiated into society" ("Spinning with Fate" 54). In addition, the products that women make become tokens of love and symbolize sexual intercourse. Jane Burns's argument about sartorial gifts, sewn shirts, and embroidered carpets expressing love and desire in medieval courtly texts can be applied to folktales as well. The scholar also believes that the donning of characters in the clothes wielded by the opposite sex is a way of refashioning their identity (64–65, 74, 94, 100–01, 107). Similarly, Marie-Louise von Franz interprets the sewing of a

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finest shirt for the hero as bestowing "subtlety of the feeling touch" on him and associates textile activities with femininity, fertility, and sex (38, 192).

The twelve fine shirts sewn by Vasilisa the Fair and the royal crowns made by the merchant's daughter in the story "The Merchant's Daughter and the Maidservant" help them find bridegrooms (*Rns,* nos. 104, 127; *RFaT* 328, 447). Maidens do not always engage in textile activities themselves, asking their servants to complete necessary tasks. Sometimes female characters demonstrate their household skills and gracefulness after the wedding, as in the case of the Frog Princess, who orders her servants to bake bread, sew a shirt, or weave a carpet (depending on the version), and dances for the tsar. By producing high-quality products, women secure their new social status and union with their partners.

One can argue that the products that maidens make play a role similar to that of a dowry in wedding ceremonies. Consequently, attire and textile artifacts may have a double function: they can demonstrate the maiden's skills and serve as gifts for future husbands or their families, especially in those cases when maidens do not have relatives who can provide a dowry for them.

In tales from Afanas'ev's collection, spinning and weaving do not really take the form of a curse nor are they associated with oppression and enslavement, as they do, for instance, in some of the Grimms' tales (Tatar 123). The evil maiden's inability to spin in one of the versions of "Father Frost" adds a supplementary feature to her negative portrait, but the lack of this skill does not affect her directly. Instead, the virtues of hard work are usually praised. In "The Sun's Sister and the Witch," the old seamstresses cannot imagine themselves dying before finishing their work. Their diligence is rewarded with the apples granting them young age (*Rns,* no. 93; Afanas'ev, *Magic Ring* 29–30).

The physical deformities provoked by spinning, such as webbed feet, are also not mentioned in the tales. Baba-Yaga, who sometimes is engaged in textile activities or compels maidens to spin or weave for her, is portrayed with a bony leg, but the leg is a symbol of her marginal position, as she belongs both to the world of living and to the otherworld. Her status as the goddess of the forest and the textile tasks that maidens perform in her domain reflect traditional patriarchal and matriarchal notions.

Following the chain of associations established by Marina Warner, one can argue that bird- and frog-maidens, who are usually in charge of the creation of exquisite garments and carpets, have misshapen feet due to both their avian or reptilian metamorphoses and their engagement in textile activities, but the narrators do not explicitly refer to such deformities, instead praising the exceptional beauty of the damsels.[46] Sometimes the prince will choose a heroine who offers to give birth to marvelous children for him instead of the

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heroines who promise to sew or weave magic garments or a flying carpet, yet the horrors of textile production do not become a subject of the tales (*Rns,* no. 283, 284). A more positive attitude toward these activities can be explained by Russia's being a traditional, patriarchal culture at the moment when the tales were created, having not yet experienced the oppression of the capitalist system and mass production. While spinning and weaving are described as usual domestic activities for women in most tales, weaving of high-quality products is usually considered a unique artistic skill belonging to exceptional maidens. Moreover, maidens who are part of a privileged class may ask their servants to complete the tasks for them. The fact that in some cases maidens produce textile products for sale to support their families signifies the women's increased importance not only in domestic life but also in social life.

Maidens can participate in other kinds of premarital trials and receive a dowry from father figures upon successful completion of their tasks. The main heroine of "Father Frost" is rewarded with warm clothes, wedding garments, and a dowry by Father Frost after enduring suffering without complaints and politely responding to her future benefactor (*Rns,* nos. 95, 96; *RFaT* 368). Cinderella-type tales, in which the main heroine endures hardship and later is rewarded with a bridegroom and rich dress indicating her new social role, have analogous structures and operate with a set of images and functions similar to that of "Father Frost."

Maidens may also test heroes before marriage and ask them to deliver their lost dowries and treasures. In "The Firebird and Princess Vasilisa," for instance, one of the three tasks that the hero has to fulfill involves finding and bringing Vasilisa's wedding gown to her (*Rns,* no. 169; *RFaT* 496–97).[47] The protagonist of "The Three Kingdoms, Copper, Silver, and Golden" has to make shoes and a dress for the heroine (*Rns,* nos. 129, 130; *RFaT* 382–85). He accomplishes these tasks either by having his servants Lame and One-eyed sew these products or by finding proper shoes and attire in the heroine's kingdom, which unravels from a ball of yarn. Tasks involving the delivery of vestimentary objects play a negotiating role and assist in uniting characters.

VIII. Metaphorical Functions

As Carole Scott subtly notes, "unlike those stories in which clothes are briefly mentioned as a reward for good behavior, the fictions in which clothing is a dominant motif make the psychic dimension paramount" (152). The stories that present the embroidering of towels and weaving of carpets by skilled maidens or their servants such as "The Three Kingdoms, Copper, Silver, and Golden"; "Go I Know Not Wither, Bring Back I Know Not What"; and "The Purchased Wife" deal with female psychic, imaginative quests, self-creation,

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and self-realization (*Rns,* nos. 130, 212, 214, 230, 231; *RFaT* 506). There is usually a direct correspondence between the maiden's appearance and the level of her or her servants' artistry. Their products may initiate a plot intrigue provoking characters' curiosity about a skillful weaver, which results in their infatuation with her (*Rns,* nos. 212, 214; *RFaT* 506–07).

In "Go I Know Not Wither," Fedot's wife (a bird-maiden) asks her nameless servant-spirits to embroider a carpet with "a view of the whole kingdom," "with towns, villages, rivers and lakes" (*RFaT* 506). The carpet fulfills a metaphorical function: it presents an imaginative picture of the world as seen from the height of a bird's or soul's flight. A woman expresses her personal psychic experience by telling a story through the pictures she imagines on the carpet, simultaneously finding human boundaries for her supernatural identity. While the story of a hero is a tale that progresses as he moves along the road, the story of a heroine is of a more static nature: she stitches it with a needle and thread on a piece of cloth.[48] The carpet functions as an alternative to the tale of the hero. A story or picture of the world depicted on tapestry glorifies life, the world, and its beings as they ought to be; symbolizes a maiden's rich creative potential; and foretells the harmonious ending of the story.

Having the gift of foresight, the maiden is usually in charge of a ball of magic yarn that directs the hero's destiny. The unraveling of the ball parallels the process of carpet making, with the traveling character realizing his and someone else's dreams, desires, and metaphors. He places them within tangible boundaries by naming and delivering them, as at the end of the tale about Fedot, who brings the spirit-servant Shmat-Razum from an unknown land. The miraculous servant, whose name means "shred of reason," is able to accomplish his master's wishes. Fedot, who is unable to compete in cunning and wisdom with his wife before embarking on his trip, receives a piece of wisdom that materializes in his servant. The psychic quest thus acquires its palpable "textile" form, completing both the literal and narrative weaving process.

Similarly to carpets, balls of yarn and rings may perform a metaphorical function. They sometimes encompass spatial entities. In different versions of "The Three Kingdoms," kingdoms shrink, turn into balls of yarn or rings, and follow Ivan as his property (*Rns,* nos. 129, 130). This ability of thread to comprise entire kingdoms probably derives from the tradition of embroidering life events on tapestries. The carpet pictures depict images enriched by the weaver's personal experience, which she conveys using her needle and thread instead of a pen; hence, thread serves a storytelling function. Similarly, the untwining of a ball of yarn in front of a character not only represents his fate, for he is destined to follow the thread, but also figuratively exemplifies the unfolding of the plot. A belt, a rope, and a chain may symbolize a road in Slavic beliefs (Petrukhin 321–22).

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Following the logic of the storytelling symbolism of tapestries and the life-giving symbolism of needles and thread, one of the sayings with which a narrator ends a tale links life with the process of cutting out caps, "began to live and cut out caps" ("The Miraculous Pipe," *Rns,* no. 246; my translation). The storyteller emphasizes the irony of this parallelism and the playfulness and inventiveness of narration by choosing a specific type of headdress that resembles a fool's cap. The process of cap making personifies life just like the process of carpet making does, only in a humorous way.[49] In addition, *kolpak* (a cap) is figuratively connected with deception through the verb *okolpachit'* (to fool, to dupe), thus hinting at the illusory, deceptive nature of storytelling.

In some tales, storytellers define the duration of a trip as three days or several months, but in many stories they either use fixed formulae, such as "for a long time or short time" or "for a long-long time"; tell us how many lands and seas the character saw; or describe the passage of time and spatial distance through the images of shoes, boots, and caps. A character often wears down three pairs of shoes, three caps, or a pair of iron boots; breaks three iron-cast staffs; or eats three stone wafers to reach his final destination (*Rns,* nos. 234, 235, 268; *RFaT* 583). These images represent the syncretic notion of the trip's distance and duration.

The metaphorical function of apparel may also reveal itself in the descriptions of natural phenomena.[50] This function goes back to mythical personifications of nature and fate. Ancient Slavs often portrayed the sun and dawn as a girl wearing red or pink attire (Afanas'ev, *Mify, pover'ia i sueveriia slavian* 1: 81, 95). They described the bright sun as being naked and the sun covered with clouds as the god putting on attire or a girl covering herself with a veil in preparation for her marriage to the god of thunderstorms (1: 98, 237, 523). Sunshine, clouds, and rain were often viewed as products of textile activities, and therefore depicted as images of spinning and sewing (1: 224–25; 3: 125–26). In Russian, the words clouds (*oblaka*), clothing/covering (*oblachenie*), and exposure/unmasking (*razoblachenie*) have the same root. Moreover, such magic objects as a self-flyer, self-victualler, or cap and cloak of invisibility, as Aleksandr Afanas'ev argues, derive their metaphorical significance from being associated with clouds, which can travel quickly, provide rainy sustenance for the earth, and conceal objects (1: 309, 527, 530; 2: 82–83, 684).

Following ancient poetic tradition, storytellers personify nature and fate in tales. In "Vasilisa the Fair," the heroine meets three horsemen, who represent day, night, and the sun; all three are dressed in the attire of their natural color (white, black, and red) (*Rns,* no. 104; *RFaT* 442–43). Sometimes happiness and misery are endowed with human features in folklore. In "Two Kinds of Luck," the narrator presents a poor brother's luck as a sleeping man in a red shirt (*Rns,* no. 304; *RFaT* 501). The red shirt suggests the possibility of revers-

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ing one's luck, since attire of this color is usually pictured as a desirable acquisition in Russian tales and is frequently associated with merchants. The man's drowsiness, however, stands in the way of the poor brother's fortune. Misery is often depicted in songs as a poorly dressed man in clothes made of matting, with bast belts, and in plain linden-bark shoes, trying to catch his victims in a net (Afanas'ev, *Mify* 3: 378–80); thus, the personification of misfortune belongs to the underprivileged peasant class.

In sum, sartorial images have a well-developed system of functions in tales. Dress can indicate or disguise social and economic status, professional occupation, gender, personality traits, geographical place, social settings in which it is worn, and the degree of a character's partiality to fashion and self-beautification. Apparel is not yet able, however, to convey a character's psychological state in most situations, although sometimes garments can provoke certain behaviors and the rudiments of emotions. The color of attire (for instance, a gray caftan versus a red one) may signal a protagonist's social status while such garments as a sarafan, an overcoat, or a camisole can help to date the tales. The characters' desire for social promotion and empowerment is usually expressed through the acquisition of beautiful apparel, with clothes often fulfilling the role of moral rewards in such instances. The popularity of powerful androgynous images of maidens attests to the presence of strong matriarchal notions in Russian culture, while the tales involving swapping episodes demonstrate the gradual weakening of vestimentary and social codes.

Since narrators do not really show their protagonists' psychological changes, we can observe the psychologically motivated transformational function only in its elementary state. This function is related to the first two, because, on the one hand, it is intended to reveal changes in personality and behavior, and, on the other hand, a change of apparel often has a disguising meaning. One can argue that a person who wears a different dress in order to conceal his identity is compelled to behave differently and thus undergoes certain psychological changes. While a concealing function operates on the level of storytelling, however—it is one of the engines that propel the plot—a transformational function works on a character level and has to do with the heroes' feelings that provoke further changes in their lives. The accent in the transformational function is on the fact of putting on new apparel rather than on purposeful change of attire to disguise one's identity. Russian tales present a rich collection of magic transformations, which includes many bird species. The emphasis on spiritual values and the importance of the concept of soul in Russian culture, "soul" being a noun of a feminine gender, can perhaps explain the popularity of maidens' avian metamorphoses and their superior status.

In the tales, attire may beautify characters and protect them from various dangers, which range from unfavorable weather conditions and enemies to

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moral and psychological threats. Garments, footwear, and carpets can also be used as vehicles that help characters surmount long distances, and a tablecloth can play the role of a feeding agent. The aesthetic and utilitarian functions often operate separately. Even in "Father Frost," where we can assume that the main character gives the maiden beautiful clothes, the narrator downplays the aesthetic function, emphasizing only the dress's warmth and richness. The ambiguous role of the godfather, donor, and metaphorical bridegroom that Frost plays expresses the presence of strong patriarchal values in Russian culture.

Attire as an object of different positive and negative negotiations—gift giving, exchange, appropriation, and theft—establishes a variety of relationships between characters that range from brotherhood, friendship, and love to ownership, dominance, estrangement, and animosity. Like disguise, sartorial negotiations usually trigger the development of the plot. Some acquisitions, such as maidens' shifts, dresses, and belts stolen by their suitors, have sexual innuendoes while others, such as boots stolen by thieves, establish the hierarchy of values within the vestimentary system.

And finally, vestimentary and textile images may symbolically represent natural phenomena, fate, and temporal and spatial categories and convey maidens' mental and psychic journeys woven and embroidered on textile artifacts. Textile activities are usually associated with maidens' domestic virtues while the artifacts they make emphasize maidens' creative potential and their ability to foretell the future. The magic ball of yarn that they give to heroes embodies their psychic skills and wisdom of foresight while their thread directs not only the heroes' destinies but also the plot of the tale.

Notes

This article has benefited greatly from the kind attention of my anonymous readers. I would like to thank them for their detailed and helpful suggestions. I am also very grateful to Alex Klimoff and Asya Magazinnik, who proofread this work at different stages of writing. Special thanks go to Vassar College for their grant, which was particularly helpful in working on this article.

1. Petr Bogatyrev undertakes a classification of folk costume's functions in Moravian Slovakia. He distinguishes between everyday, holiday, ceremonial, and ritual costumes and assigns ranked sets of functions to these types of attire, including practical, aesthetic, regionalistic, holiday, and ritual ones and those of social status or class identification. The scholar connects aesthetic and erotic functions and discusses costume's magical role, which corresponds to the transformational function in my classification. He also talks about sociosexual and moral functions and interprets costume as both an object and a sign. While perceiving the everyday costume as mainly an object whose dominant role is practical, he views the holiday costume as a sign whose functions (aesthetic, regionalistic, status-identification, and others) are connected with "various aspects of life symbolized by the cos-

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tume" (43–44, 53–54, 75, 80, 82–83, 91). For a survey of works interpreting dress and fashion in social and cultural contexts, see Joanne Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress, and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Polite Press, 2000).

2. *Rns,* nos. 115, 156, 164, 193, 197, 335, 559. All numbers of fairy tales are in accordance with Afanas'ev's index. Wherever it is possible, page numbers to the English edition are provided. In some cases I have included different English versions of the tales if they use similar images. The references to the English texts may appear in a different order. *RFaT* 207, 379; RF-T 56. Occasionally, I have provided references to Thompson's motif index.
3. This example is taken from the second version of Afanas'ev's tale "Horns." A camisole is a type of an old-fashioned jacket for men.
4. Poor and rich attire is also described in *Rns,* nos. 213, 296, 314, 325, 335, 383, 567; *RFaT* 101, 591; *RF-T* 187.
5. On the ideological implications of German tales, see Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell* 49, 53, 69, 110.
6. See *Rns,* nos. 174, 213, 265, 296, 303–05, 308, 314, 324, 325, 343, 365, 383, 386, 397, 399, 432, 567, 569, 578; *RFaT* 343. The translation is not accurate: the word *sarafan* is rendered as a gown. *RFaT,* nos. 21, 101, 151, 210, 214, 501, 591; *RF-T* 37, 187.
7. In the English version of "The Maiden Tsar," the word *caftan* is translated as *tunic.* See *RFaT* 230.
8. See, for instance, *Rns,* nos. 193, 213, 296, 324, 325, 337, 338, 365, 386; *RFaT* 101–02, 210, 592. A *boyar* is a member of the upper stratum of medieval Russian society and state administration.
9. For a similar motif, see *Rns,* nos. 115, 164, 174, 324, 325; *RFaT* 207, 210; *RF-T* 187.
10. *Rns,* nos. 219, 224, 225, 227, 250; *RFaT* 434; *RF-T* 72.
11. See, for instance, *Rns,* nos. 158, 198, 342, 343, 399; *RFaT* 420, 488.
12. See, for instance, *Rns,* nos. 302, 271 (the version listed in the notes), 290, 291; *RFaT* 405.
13. See, for instance, *Rns,* nos. 137, 158, 162, 224; *RFaT* 483, 488. For positive and negative images of tailors in the Grimms' tales, see Zipes, *Brothers Grimm* 57–59, 68–69. A tailor's profession was not highly valued in Europe. In the Grimms' tales, tailors are usually traveling characters portrayed either as sly and mischievous or as industrious craftsmen. Similar characteristics of tailors or so-called tailors can be found in Russian tales. See, for instance, *Rns,* nos. 56, 386.
14. For a similar motif, see *Rns,* no. 230.
15. *Rns,* nos. 136, 159, 160, 198–200, 202, 232, 233, 578; *RF-T* 229–34, 234–49, 269–73, 304–07, 553–62.
16. For a discussion of gender-concealing plots in folklore and in medieval and Renaissance literature, see Burns; Krzhizhanovskii 56–66, esp. 62–64; Hodgdon 179–97; Hotchkiss; Levine; Sokolov 441. On implications of transvesticism in defining sex roles in literature, see Gilbert 393–417. Also, see *Rns,* no. 338; *RF-T* 75–77.
17. On medieval images of werewolves in European literature, see Bynum 77–111. Caroline Bynum argues that metamorphosis may hint at certain traits and psychological conditions of the character. For instance, the image of a werewolf can

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implicate rapacity (31). The scholar believes that change interested medieval people not only as a means of positioning oneself in natural cycles and social structures and establishing one's identity, but also as an ontological problem (18).

18. *Rns,* nos. 101, 213–16, 219, 220, 222–24, 235, 237, 260–65, 267–70, 272, 276, 277, 289, 363, 368, 375, 377, 566, 570; *RFaT* 120–22, 148–49, 200–02, 343, 407, 431, 505, 523, 546–47, 582, 597; *RF-T* 283–86, 287–89. On the motifs of enchantment and disenchantment expressed "by covering with a garment or an animal skin," see von Franz 126.
19. *Rns,* nos. 114, 168, 185, 236, 259; *RFaT* 125–30, 352–53, 549, 620.
20. *Rns,* nos. 105, 136–38, 220, 249, 250–52; *RF-T* 51, 255; *RFaT* 242–45, 247, 265–66.
21. *Rns,* nos. 130, 213, 219, 220, 222, 267–69; *RFaT* 119–23, 431.
22. See *Rns,* nos. 165–66; *RFaT* 46.
23. *Rns,* nos. 212, 214, 230, 231, 234, 283, 284; *RFaT* 506, 585.
24. See, for instance, *Rns,* nos. 169, 170, 290, 291; *RFaT* 496–97.
25. *Rns,* nos. 137, 156, 206, 215, 233, 270, 271, 296, 308, 309, 317, 564; *RFaT* 102–08; 238–41; 605–06, 611; *RF-T* 290–91.
26. *Rns,* nos. 208, 209; *RFaT* 111.
27. *Rns,* nos. 103, 105, 212, 215, 216, 224; *RFaT* 512, 527; *RF-T* 51.
28. See Petrukhin 277–78 for discussion of the ways of protecting babies from evil fate in Slavic traditions.
29. *Rns,* nos. 192, 240, 272, 298, 299, 562; *RFaT* 293. The cap of invisibility and winged sandals were associated with Hermes in Greek mythology.
30. See also *Rns,* nos. 192, 197, 237, 240, 272, 570; *RFaT* 293–94; Afanas'ev, *RF-T* 57, 59.
31. Characters have caps of invisibility in *Rns,* nos. 194, 198 (the version listed in the notes), 199, 240, 272, 298, 299, 562; *RF-T* 107.
32. See Propp 74–75 for discussion of the function of a ball of yarn. See *Rns,* nos. 130, 161, 173, 215, 216, 234, 269, 363; *RFaT* 377–79, 478, 524–25, 583, 595. A ring or a ball may also provide directions in tales. See, for instance, *Rns,* nos. 212, 214, 225; *RFaT* 511–12. In some tales, a rope or belt can help a character to descend from the sky. See *Rns,* nos. 420, 421; *RFaT* 348.
33. On discussion of female textile activities, see, for instance, Tatar, *Hard Facts;* Warner, *From the Beast;* Weigle, *Spiders and Spinsters;* Zipes, "Spinning with Fate."
34. *Rns,* nos. 193, 231, 304, 308, 332–34, 381; *RFaT* 290, 502; *RF-T* 261.
35. In the stories about fools, brothers may promise a simpleton beautiful apparel in exchange for fulfilling various tasks. *Rns,* nos. 165, 182; *RFaT* 46, 48, 533. See also *Rns,* nos. 245, 279; *RFaT* 426, for a similar motif.
36. See, for instance, *Rns,* nos. 219, 220, 222, 223; *RFaT* 432. See also *Rns,* 267–69; *RFaT* 122, for a similar motif. The function of the shoe in Cinderella-type stories is analogous.
37. According to Bruce Clarke, myths of woman's creation "stigmatized the female as daemonic—a shifty, transformative supplement disrupting a prior, proper ratio." The writer interprets "the metamorphic exile of the body" as "the tribulations of the immortal soul in a material world," and as "an allegory of writing," "the change of meanings under metaphoric processes" (16, 21, 27, 57).
38. Also, see Propp 52 for discussion of the hero's branding.

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39. See *Rns,* nos. 212 (the version in the notes), 571 (3: 366); *RFaT* 513, for a similar motif.
40. See, for instance, *Rns,* nos. 136, 137, 155 (the version in the notes), 159 (the version in the notes); *RFaT* 240, 472, 559.
41. *Rns,* nos. 124, 129, 136, 216, 219, 220, 222, 223, 228, 292, 293, 295, 296, 314, 336, 337; *RFaT* 45–46, 108, 240, 383–85, 417–18, 432, 527.
42. Belyi Polianin is a name of a Russian knight.
43. See *Rns,* no. 212 (the version in the notes); *RFaT* 518, for a similar motif.
44. *Rns,* nos. 211 (the version in the notes), 232, 233, 235, 295; Afanas'ev, *Magic Ring* 113; *RFaT* 230–31; *RF-T* 236.
45. See, for instance, *Rns,* nos. 214, 230, 231, 283, 284, 328, 332, 570; *RFaT* 120, 254, 289–90, 506. Spinning is often connected with witchcraft. See the Russian versions of "The Bold Knight, the Apples of Youth, and the Water of Life" (*Rns,* nos. 174, 178). For the discussion of the association of a spinster with witchcraft and womanhood, see Weigle 28–32; von Franz 38.
46. Marina Warner connects the image of the storytellers' webbed feet with "the fantasized illicit knowledge that women are supposed to possess" and with their interest in the tabooed domains. On the significance of the lost shoe and the imagery related to a female foot, its size and imperfections, see *From the Beast* 122, 128, 203–04. Also, see Tatar 106–14, 123–33, on the downside of spinning as a process that deforms heroines.
47. See also *Rns,* nos. 129, 170, 240, 290, 291; *RFaT* 383–85, 496–97, for a similar motif.
48. On parallels between spinning and storytelling and the power of spinning in breaking magical spells, see Tatar 106–16.
49. See also *Rns,* no. 234. A storyteller humorously turns attention upon himself at the end of this story, describing how wedding guests put a fool's cap on his head.
50. Bruce Clarke views clothing and metaphor as "cultural surpluses that derive from human lacks" (77).

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